

Royal Botanic Gardens Kew

Inspiring futures

Eli Biondi



What is your job title?

Princess of Wales Conservatory Supervisor.

Why is science important in your career?

Science is essentially at the base of my career. You get to know your plants and their requirements with experience, but it is all down to science: why a plant needs water, why it needs fertilisers and so on.

What is your average work day like?

I start at 8 and often I help the team with the watering, as we water the plants before 10.

We then have team work, which could be pruning, planting plants or attaching epiphytes to trees. If the Orchid Festival is approaching we might do some odd tasks such as making animals out of branches or metal wire or making a concrete tree.

There is also some training involved: how to prune, recognise nutrient deficiencies and pests & diseases. We do regular sessions with the students. I spend quite a lot of time in the office doing admin: ordering for the Orchid Festival and designing new displays.

Did you go to university? If so, what did you study? If not, what did you do after leaving school?

Yes, I did a BSc in Science and Technology for Nature and Environment at the University of Udine, in Italy. In 2015 I also did a Diploma in Garden Design. After that I worked in a nursery and as a Land Evaluationer and Landscape Designer. I then came to Kew to do a traineeship for one year working with tropical plants and never left.

What sort of personality traits do you have that help you in your career?

I believe that to do any job you need some interest and passion. Whatever the task, there is always something interesting about it and something to learn from it.

As I manage a team, a lot of people skills are required. Being professional, collaborative, kind and respectful is a must.

What helped you get your role at Kew?

My passion and knowledge for plant, work ethic and professionalism.

What advice would you give to someone considering a career like yours?

Be hungry for knowledge, gain experience volunteering and doing work experience, especially if you are still at school. Share what you know with other people and follow your passion.

It is not a well paid job, but the rewards are massive.

What do you want people to know about your work?

Plants and nature in general are fundamental for life. Working with them makes you feel good.

A thirst for knowledge and a respect for others are at the core of what I do; studying, gaining experience and sharing it with others is paramount.

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